A NEW TRANSFER STRATEGY: "MAJOR-READY"

Developed by the Joint Access Oversight Group
Approved by the Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers (ICAO) and the Instruction Commission (IC) Executive Committee

Students transferring from a community college to a baccalaureate college or university in the state of Washington have long enjoyed one of the better transfer systems in the nation. Our history of success with the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) should not suggest, however, that further improvement is either unnecessary or impossible.

The additional spaces gained by making students' progress through the system as efficient as possible are small relative to the need for more funded access at all levels. Nevertheless, every efficiency that can be extracted from the system as a whole is of benefit to both students waiting to enter higher education and those already in college who are eager to complete a degree in order to enter or advance in their careers.

Several years ago a new associate's degree was developed for just this reason. The community colleges and the baccalaureate colleges and universities, working together, designed an Associate of Science Transfer degree. The AS-T is a much more efficient way for students aspiring to science and engineering baccalaureate degrees to start out because – unlike the liberal arts-based DTA -- it includes all of the first and second year science and math courses required for students to enter those majors as juniors.

Encouraged by this success, together the community colleges and the baccalaureate colleges and universities more recently developed a specialized DTA for pre-business majors, followed by several specialized associate's degree pathways for students intending to become secondary science teachers.

In 2003 the academic leadership of the state's public two and four-year colleges and universities, informed by these new initiatives, decided to fundamentally rethink our approach to transfer and articulation. What has emerged is a statewide commitment to a new way of conceptualizing the interface between community college and university, and new pathways to lead students through it. The original DTA emphasized completion of all the lower-division general education requirements. In contrast, the new approach is termed, "Major-Ready."

Major-ready students will have completed the lower-division requirements for entry into their chosen major. They will also have completed the writing, mathematics, and as many other general education requirements as are normally completed in the first two years by students entering that major who are already at the university.

Students planning to enter most humanities and social science majors, as well as undecided students, will continue to find that the original DTA is their best preparation, and they will be "Major-Ready" by completing it. However, students entering science-based majors, business, and a number of other majors will soon have available an increasing array of pathways that will lead them more directly toward their goals.

For both community college and university students, "Major-Ready" includes early selection of academic interests. In order to be able to complete an appropriate pathway, transfer students should declare a broad area of interest during their 1st year and select a major or cluster of related majors by the start of their 2nd year. Transfer students should recognize that due to inadequate resources at the universities, some majors are highly selective, both for them and equally for students already at the university, so flexibility may be required in choosing either the desired university or the desired major, or both.

Working together, the community colleges and baccalaureate institutions are committed to the following actions:

1. Work groups of appropriate faculty and staff will develop additional Major-Ready pathways -- most, but not all, within the framework of the DTA or the AS-T. A few may be either more or less than 90 quarter credits in length.

2. To support this effort, the public universities will move toward consistency in pre-requisites for majors they have in common.

3. Both community colleges and public universities will work toward reciprocity statewide in the core general education requirements.

4. When enrollments are limited, the public universities will grant higher priority among transfer applicants to major-ready students than to other transfers.

5. Colleges and universities will change their communication strategies and advice to students, parents and educators to emphasize the importance of choosing and following major-ready pathways that will lead efficiently toward students' goals.

At the direction of the Legislature, and in cooperation with the Higher Education Coordinating Board, Major-Ready pathways currently under development include:

Associate in Pre-Nursing Science (DTA pathway)
Associate in Engineering (multiple AS-T pathways)
Associate in Elementary Education (DTA pathway)

Additional pathways are being considered and will be developed as the need is identified.

APPENDIX
MAJOR-READY DEGREE PATHWAYS (AS OF OCTOBER 2004)

Degrees based on the DTA -- degrees structured under the DTA umbrella provide:

- Priority consideration in the admissions process ahead of non-degreed transfers,
- Completion of lower division general education requirements,
- Credit for all courses completed within the DTA,
- Opportunity to explore several fields of study through electives,
- Opportunity to complete prerequisites for a future major.

Associate in Arts - Direct Transfer Degree (DTA) (applies to most fields unless otherwise specified below)

Associate in Business - DTA
(http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/transfer/docs/Associate%20in%20Business%20-%20DTA.pdf)

Associate in Math Education -DTA
(http://www.instruction.greenriver.edu/kclay/articulation/AssocMathEd.pdf)

Degrees based on the Associate in Science degree, Tracks 1 and 2 -- degrees structured under the AS-T umbrella provide:

- Priority consideration in the admissions process ahead of non-degreed transfers
- Completion of similar lower division general education requirements as 1st and 2nd year university students in science-based fields,
- Credit for all courses completed within the AS-T,
- Opportunity to complete math and science prerequisites for the chosen major
- Opportunity to explore other fields within the electives included in the degree.

Associate in Science - Track 1 (biology/chemistry and related fields)

Associate in Science - Track 2 (engineering & physics and related fields)

Associate in Chemistry Education - AS-T Track 1
http://www.instruction.greenriver.edu/kclay/articulation/AssocChemEd.pdf

Associate in Biology Education - AS-T Track 1
http://www.instruction.greenriver.edu/kclay/articulation/AssocBioEd.pdf

Associate in Physics Education - AS-T Track 2
http://www.instruction.greenriver.edu/kclay/articulation/AssocPhysicsEd.pdf

Associate in General Science Education - AS-T Track 1
http://www.instruction.greenriver.edu/kclay/articulation/AssocGenSciEd.pdf

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